

SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting of Thursday, February 15, 1996
Room BC-110, 10:30

Present: V. Baba, E. Besso, P. Bird, T. Bui (Chair), G. Garvey, D. Gold, F. Haghighat, E. Loo (recording secretary), D. Markiewicz, R. Storms, S. Suen, J. Tomberlin, M. Vipond

Regrets: D. Pariser

Absent: K. Bolh

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED AND DISTRIBUTED TO SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

SRC-02-15-96-A Agenda for the SRC Meeting of February 15, 1996
SRC-12-14-95-M Minutes of the SRC Meeting of December 14, 1995
SRC-02-15-96-D1 Response to the report of the auditor general of Québec concerning research and teaching.
SRC-12-14-95-D2 Memorandum dated November 27, 1995 from Dr. T. Bui to Dr. J. Lightstone - Draft of Revised Recommendations for the Report on Research Centres at Concordia University (SRC-12-14-95-D2)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

1. Approval of Agenda (SRC-02-15-96-A)

E. Besso suggested that an item with regard to nomination of individuals for prizes and awards should be added under Other Business, item 9 of the Agenda. The Agenda for the meeting was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes from the meeting of December 14, 1995.

E. Besso clarified about Section 5 of the Report of the Director, Office of Research Services, last paragraph: The award that Dr. Hoa has received is in the Technology Partnerships Program. We have submitted an application to the Intellectual Property Program which was for an additional Technology Transfer officer to be situated at Concordia.

The Minutes for the December meeting were approved.

3. Business arising from Minutes

With regard to the Institute for Scientific Information software for university planning, there was interest by each of the Faculties in purchasing the software which could not be acquired through the license agreement by CREPUQ. It is up to each university who is interested to pursue the acquisition. The Office of the Vice-Rector, Academic has asked Institutional Planning & Research to take a look at the software and to make recommendations. Committee members feel that Concordia should purchase the software but there is a need for a person or an office to be in charge of the project.

With regard to the proposed projects for technological improvement, it was mentioned that Dr. C.L. Bertrand is collecting submissions from Faculties for projects related to the money that the government is putting to improve/upgrade computer equipment in Quebec universities.

4. Report of the Chair

Chair congratulated Dr. J. Stewart and Dr. S. Amir for their scientific breakthrough. The two researchers from the Centre for Studies in Behavioral Neurology have unlocked a key to the functioning of internal body clocks in mammals.

Chair remarked that at a recent meeting at CREPUQ, Mr. Leo Derikx, Director General of NSERC gave some advance information about the new CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND initiated by NSERC for R&D and commercialization of the research carried out in Canadian universities. The reason to create this fund according to NSERC is to close the gap between the excellent research done in Canadian universities and the lack of commercialization opportunities. The Fund would be supported by public shareholders who would be able to buy shares which would be eligible for tax credits from the governments. The federal government and some provincial governments including Ontario have agreed to participate. Negotiations were still going on with other provincial governments including Quebec. The official announcement of the Fund would be some time this Summer at the earliest. This undertaking was similar to the MEDICAL CAPITAL VENTURE FUND created in 1994 which has grown to \$40 M at the rate of about \$0.5 M a day. The NSERC Fund was expected to be much larger, perhaps in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars. The money would be used to support contract research in Canadian universities judged commercially viable and to support commercialization of the research results.

Chair informed committee members that he has a copy of the Exposé de la situation de l'état généraux de l'éducation du Québec.

5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services

- Some staff changes within the Office of Research Services recently: Nannette Plant who was the Contract Officer in the Industrial Liaison Unit has been promoted to Grants Officer. She is replacing M. Svensson who has joined the Faculty of Engineering & Computer Science as Budget Officer.

5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services

- Upon recommendation of the Review Committee for the Industrial Liaison Office to set-up an Advisory Board for the Industrial Liaison Unit, she has been collecting a list of people to recommend to the Vice-Rector, Academic. She thanked the Associate/Vice-Deans for the nominations, she is still waiting for the list from Fine Arts and she hopes everything will be in place within 6-8 weeks.
- ORS has been invited to begin the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.
- Fonds FCAR - There is a change in the direction of the funds. Ms. C. Martel who has been the president for 3 years has returned to the Provincial civil service. Dr. Y. Rousseau who was Director, Scientific Affairs is the acting president.
- ORS has contacted Fonds FCAR with regard to site visits for centres. They are meeting early March to decide which visits will occur and in what format.
- The HORIZONS brochure, following Mr. M. Hainsworth departure as head of Marketing Communications, there was a little bit of time loss and they are now negotiating with the printer. The text has been completed, they will be adding one extra two-sided page.
- Activity of faculty members in Distance Education: In the December meeting E. Besso mentioned an opportunity for collaboration with the private sector that has arisen from a meeting with a consortium of industries in the Centre for Distance Education. This has led to three meetings with the faculty members in the Education Department, the last one involved the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science, unfortunately because of scheduling problems, the Vice-Rectors were unable to attend. There is a tremendous degree of enthusiasm but we appear not to be at the level of cohesion where it is reasonable to solicit outside support in the form of both in kind and cash input to the effort. We are at this point attempting to schedule a meeting at which the project will be presented to the Vice-Rectors so that we will have an internal consensus prior to external proposal.
- The application for Intellectual Property Management opportunity at NSERC, in collaboration with McGill has not been selected for funding. We will not be preparing to receive a technology transfer officer.
- E. Besso expressed her growing concern with the number of departures of faculty members, particularly in the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. She also expressed concern as to the degree of support that is requested in some cases from ORS for individuals who may be leaving and who are not quite separate from Concordia at this point but where we are aware of the process.

6. Question Period

At the suggestion of the Chair, E. Besso again raised the issue that a large number of researchers are leaving the University, in particular from the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering. She also asked about the closing or merging of programmes where there is research activity. She asked about the evolution of research effort within the department and how it is being discussed within the Faculty.

6. Question Period

C. Suen remarked that the chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering is very concerned about faculty leaving the Department. This is a very difficult situation because of the high demand in the industry. The States is offering higher salaries than Canadian institutions. This is a very hot area, those graduating will get good jobs and high salaries, they are lured to the South. The political situation in Québec and the money factor are not conducive, people of high calibre receive several offers and this is the dilemma we are facing.

D. Markiewicz remarked that there is a need to separate the issues, there is the issues of changing programmes, structures and so on, to her knowledge none of those planned discussions have included eliminating positions. There might be positions eliminated but the individuals themselves will not be let go as a result of the changing structures, so she thinks this has different implication. As for the role of research services, where you know that person is leaving, perhaps we may require a policy that may involve incorporating something in the contract or some agreement between the person and the University that should that be the case, there will be some formal compensation. She does not know about the legal aspect of that but it seems to be something that could potentially be built into the contract so that it is there upfront from the beginning and people know that if they are going to engage research services in the process.

7(a) Response to the report of the auditor general of Québec concerning research and teaching (SRC-02-15-96-D1)

Chair remarked that this document is a draft response from Dr. Alain Caillé, Vice-Rector, Research of Université Sherbrooke and President of the comité de la recherche of CREPUQ to Dr. Pierre Reid, President of CREPUQ. The report of the auditor general stated among many other things that because Québec universities are pushing for more research and administrative duties, teaching load in Québec universities has dropped from the norm of 4 to the current average of 3. According to the auditor general this has cost the government at least \$20 M.

D. Markiewicz appreciated the written response from Dr. Alain Caillé, she thinks that when we talk about teaching there is a tendency to ignore graduate education, the amount of time that is involved in teaching graduate students is enormous. About the implications of research for teaching and the learning experience of students, we need to continue to reinforce that. One of the things she particularly appreciated about this is that there was a more assertive response to this. It's about time to be more aggressive and explicit about the implications of research for learning.

P. Bird remarked that there is an element of truth, in some cases, in the notion that there are people who prefer to do research and direct graduate students over undergraduate teaching. We should encourage that talent rather than condemn it.

V. Baba noted that our response should bring to light the symbiotic nature of graduate education and research while the cost of one course reduction is about \$20M, it is indeed offset by an increase in research output and research training. He thinks our response should be two things: to point out the benefits and to highlight that research and graduate education are linked.

7(a) Response to the report of the auditor general of Québec concerning research and teaching (SRC-02-15-96-D1)

D. Markiewicz noted that part of the difficulty that we repeatedly encounter is the misconception about what the work of a university professor entails. There is still a tendency on the part of the general public to assimilate that to their own experience which is going to school and hearing a person lecture. What they think is the work of a university professor and until that issue, and that misconception is addressed we will continue to be fighting this battle about the number of hours that faculty members are lecturing.

D. Gold noted that this is very depressing, this is the same exact arguments we've been having over the years, she thinks that we should reply and mention all the points we have discussed.

Chair remarked that the auditor general is somebody who criticizes both the government and the public sectors. Most of the time recommendations or criticisms of the auditor general are quite reasonable to the public. An average teaching load of 3 courses is low if we consider that only about 30% of the professorate in Québec are productive researchers holding multiple grants and guiding many graduate students. If the other group has a higher teaching load for an equitable workload between the two groups, the average teaching load in Québec would be higher.

It was remarked that the University has to determine somehow what kind of mixture between research and graduate teaching and undergraduate teaching we should have and then we should adjust our policy so that we don't look down on those people who are doing undergraduate teaching. The University has to be very careful with the hiring process, so that there will be people hired for undergraduate teaching.

D. Markiewicz remarked that at the University we have a collective agreement that supposedly was set-up to do so, but if it has not been interpreted in this way, we have to get back to it and take it seriously.

7(b) Policy on Intellectual Property in Research

Chair noted that this subject has been brought up in the past, it is still unclear what are the subject matters to be included in this policy because intellectual property is very broad. At this point he does not want to bring it here for discussion, he will table this item now and bring it back at a later meeting.

7(c) Support of research infrastructure from frais indirect: Proposed Guidelines (SRC-12-14-95-D2) (*Memorandum dated November 27, 1995 from Dr. T. Bui to Dr. J. Lightstone*)

Chair reminded the committee that the report on research centres at Concordia developed by a Task Force was discussed and revised by this committee and was submitted to the Vice-Rector, Academic with a proposal with regard to the re-distribution of the 50% of the frais indirect to units including research centres. Although the proposal would not solve all the problems, it will solve most of the financial issues discussed in the report. The proposal was approved in principle with some minor changes. At the time the proposal was submitted, Chair did not discuss the guidelines concerning this future funds.

7(c) Support of research infrastructure from frais indirect: Proposed Guidelines (SRC-12-14-95-D2) (Memorandum dated November 27, 1995 from Dr. T. Bui to Dr. J. Lightstone)

P. Bird supported this proposal and hoped that this amount will not be considered as CASA funds, he commented that this should be definitely earmarked as for infrastructure support.

Chair remarked that it is separate from the CASA funds and suggested that there should be a small group to look at the guidelines for the distribution of the fund.

It was agreed that the Chair should call up a meeting with the Associate/Vice Deans, Research to discuss the issue.

8. For Information:

Various CREPUQ documents.

9. Other Business

E. Besso remarked that there is a need to identify the process to recognize research achievement. Her perception is that there is no systematic approach to nominating individuals who have research achievements for awards and prizes.

P. Bird noted that in the Faculty of Arts & Science this is done on an adhoc basis. The nominations are solicited then it goes to the level of departments.

It was suggested that may be the office of Research Services and the Deans' office would be in a better position to nominate individuals.

It was moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

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